

IMB family survives Kenya massacre

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Chris and Jamie Suel, along with their five children, walked into Northgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, on Sept. 21, just minutes before Muslim extremists began firing automatic weapons and tossing hand grenades.

The family had already decided to go separate ways — Chris with one child and Jamie with four. It was only after five harrowing hours that they were reunited.

For three hours, Jamie and the four children hid behind stacks of packaged flour in a storage area. "I remember thinking on the way in that the flour would be good, protective from bullets."

They heard the sounds of hand grenades, machine guns, and helicopters as they hid. Using her cell phone, Jamie managed to maintain contact with her husband and other members of the Kenya Baptist Mission.

Chris and a son were on a different floor at the other side of the mall.

"After a while, some men identifying themselves as police started yelling that it was OK, it was clear, come out, it was OK," Jamie said. "I didn't trust it at all. I called Chris, and while everyone else left he told me that it was not clear and I should not leave."



IN MOURNING — Students at Rosslyn Academy, a Christian school in Nairobi, Kenya, hold prayer services in response to three days of national mourning declared by the country's president after the Northgate Mall massacre by Muslim extremists from Sudan. Many children of missionaries attend the school. (BP photo courtesy of Rosslyn Academy)

"After hanging up I heard a barrage of gunfire. I thought they had been massacred. I prayed God would put a protective bubble around us so we would not be seen or heard."

Eventually, when all seemed clear, Jamie and her four children made their way to safety.

As the attack on the mall commenced, Chris and his son tried to find the rest of their

family. They had to turn back, however, as bullets struck the escalator they were on, ricocheting everywhere. They hid in a store where workers shut and locked its doors.

"The gunshots kept going non-stop for 10 minutes," Chris said. When the gunfire stopped he was able to reach Jamie by phone and learn she and their four children were OK, hiding

elsewhere in the mall.

"For the next five hours, grenades and gunshots could be heard," he said. "We were getting phone calls telling us that it was a terrorist attack, and terrorists were pretending to be police to lure people from their hiding spots."

see KENYA on p. 8

Blackaby bypass surgery a success

ATLANTA (BP) — Southern Baptist Bible teacher Henry Blackaby's quadruple bypass surgery on Sept. 24 "could not have gone better," and his prospects for future ministry look good, according to a statement from his family.



BLACKABY Henry Blackaby is out of surgery this morning. The surgeon indicated the quadruple bypass surgery could not have gone better. Henry has been living with blocked or 70% blocked arteries for several years," said the statement, posted on the Blackaby Ministries International website.

"The doctor claims he will feel much better once his recovery is complete. Please pray for his recovery and that there will be no complications. He may be

see BLACKABY on p. 9

Pastor remains in Iran prison, under torture

NEW YORK (BP and local reports) — As Iranian-American pastor Saeed Abedini marks one year of imprisonment and torture in Tehran's brutal Evin Prison, his wife encountered Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, in a New York hotel lobby and passed along a letter from the prisoner to the president.

Naghmeah Abedini, who lives in Idaho with the couple's two children, was in New York to film interviews with Fox News, CNN, and other outlets calling for her husband's release. She happened to be staying in the same hotel as the Iranian delegation, in town for the United Nations General Assembly.

As Rouhani approached the elevators Sept. 23, Naghmeah Abedini gave the letter to one of his delegates, who promised to deliver the letter to the president, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLU), which is representing her, reported.



NAGHMEH AND SAEED ABEDINI

In the letter, Saeed Abedini recounts his plight and asks the Iranian president to initiate a review of his case, stating that according to Iran's constitution "choosing the religion and participating in religious meetings and activities are totally legitimate in Iran, but staying in

prison for me and other people like me is for sure illegal."

Ahead of his first visit to the United States as Iran's president, Rouhani wrote an op-ed in The Washington Post Sept. 19 reminding Americans that he ran on a moderate platform of "prudence and hope" and gained a "broad, popular mandate."

"I'm committed to fulfilling my promises to my people, including my pledge to engage in constructive interaction with the world," Rouhani wrote, adding, "Gone is the age of blood feuds. World leaders are expected to lead in turning threats into opportunities."

Also in his column, Rouhani wrote of the Middle East, "We must create an atmosphere where peoples of the region can decide their own fates."

As Rouhani departed Iran for the

see ABEDINI on p. 9

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Missing in action

In Mississippi Baptist churches all across the state, happy voices are once again filling the hallways as summer fades and our children make their way to a new year of Royal Ambassadors (RA).

As the boys settle in for their weekly RA sessions eager to know how to grow into real men who love the Lord and His Kingdom work, they thrill to the action stories of missionary adventures — especially when the heroes of these real-life stories are boys their age.

They soak up every word of presentations by missionaries who visit their classrooms. They crave the tactile exhilaration of handling everything the missionaries bring with them. They listen raptly as the missionaries talk of ancient cultures, unusual traditions, and unique foods in the mission fields where they serve. The boys become completely swept away in the moment.

Even at their tender age, they are beginning to grasp how important it is to be personally involved in making disciples. As boys are apt to do, they eagerly await manhood and ask questions about how missions will fit into their lives in the years to come.

In RAs, the foundation is laid for a new generation of male leadership. Seeds of thought and action are planted that will fully bloom only in the decades to come. The boys earnestly seek to understand what will be expected of them when they are men, in the context of a church program that is perfectly designed to teach them to do just that.

And the boys are taught these lifelong traits of Christian manhood by... women.

That's no slam against the women of the church who have stepped up to the plate — and gone outside of their normal areas of responsibility — to pick up the slack where the men of the church have so clearly failed. Surely God will bless these women for doing so.

There's simply no way to paint a pretty picture of the

scandal of male leadership missing in action in our churches when it comes to missions education. In too many churches, men have failed to assume the mantle of leadership for raising our boys with a tradition of missions education.

There are the old, tired excuses for dodging church duty, dusted off for fresh use. Gotta work late, pastor. That's my tee time. Back trouble. Gout. Bad kidneys. Chronic headaches. Bad nerves. Deer season. Boring material. Not a good speaker. Not educated. Dog ate my homework.

What's your excuse? If the men of the church don't get involved with these impressionable young boys who are so eager to know more about their faith, how can we expect these men-in-waiting to grow into responsible church leaders of the future?

From whence will come our missionaries and missions leaders of the next generation, if we fail this crucial task? When we call out in our old age for someone to whom we can pass our mantle, what if no one answers?

The late Harry Chapin composed a song entitled, Cat's in the Cradle. It is about a man who doesn't realize until it is too late that his son has grown up never knowing his busy, distracted father. As the instructive tune nears its end, the now-elderly father comes to understand an important truth after a short, hurried telephone conversation with his adult son:

As I hung up the phone it occurred to me/My boy was just like me/He'd grown up just like me.

The symbolic cat may indeed be in the cradle in many of our churches, where it really counts: male leadership in missions education. It will be tragic indeed if a generation of boys grows up to be like us — full of excuses, busy with unimportant things, distracted, and lacking priorities for what really matters in life.

Will that be your legacy?

A matter of relationships, trust

State convention season is here! I spoke at the Baptist Convention of New York's annual meeting early last week to kick off a full season of state convention travel.

My goal is to represent the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to as many states as possible. The reason for this is simple: It is a time when I can touch the lives of a large number of pastors and church leaders.

Our cooperative ministries will only thrive when trust is strong among the churches, associations, state conventions, and the SBC. I strive to encourage our state convention leaders in the common work for Christ in which we're engaged. Trust is built when these relationships are strengthened.

Our state conventions serve as partners in many ways. First and foremost, they are involved in reaching people in their respective states with the Gospel. They also provide specialized ministries to a large number of our churches.

With more than two thirds of our churches facing slow-growth or no-growth challenges, many of our churches are hurting. In most instances, when a church needs help it is the state convention to which it goes for training, encouragement, and assistance across a wide range of needs.

State conventions also serve as partners as the conduits through which our Southern Baptist missions and ministries receive Cooperative Program (CP) funds to do the work God has entrusted to them. They have taken significant steps in forwarding a larger percentage of CP funds to these SBC ministries, for which we are grateful. Partnerships developed over the decades remain strong as we join together to do the work of God at every level.

It took me a little over a year in my current role to get to every state convention and visit with the executive directors of those conventions. I have found these men to be deeply called and passionate about winning people to Christ.

Interestingly enough, most come from the states they serve and have a deep passion for their home base. They also have a clear vision for reaching the nations with the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, both here and abroad.



Guest opinion
with Frank Page

I have often said that if we lose the base, we have lost the battle. We need to work as partners in encouraging one another. While we have many, many churches in our state conventions, particularly in the South, we desperately need to understand the loneliness that surrounds even those churches.

If there was ever a time when we need to be strengthening churches to reach the lost, it is now. Our state partners are true helpers in that needed ministry.

Join me in praying for the work of our state convention ministry partners.

■ Pray for your state convention executive director. In Mississippi, that's Jim Futral.

■ Pray for the church planting and other ministry specialists employed by your state convention.

■ Pray for the ministry entities of your state convention.

■ Pray for and participate in the missions initiatives of your state convention.

■ Pray for the collegiate ministries in your state.

■ Pray for me as I continue my assignment of building relationships and hopefully deepening trust as we encourage one another in the good work of our Lord.

I am thankful for our state convention partners and pray this fall will be a time of deepening resolve and commitment to the work of our Lord.

Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee in Nashville, is serving as interim pastor of First Church, Jackson.

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So. Baptist leaders defend military chaplain guidelines

NASHVILLE (BP) — New guidelines from the North American Mission Board (NAMB) prohibiting Southern Baptist military chaplains from officiating same sex marriage ceremonies and counseling same sex couples reflect the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and its most basic understanding of separation of church and state, Russell D. Moore, president of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said in an online video dialogue Sept. 19.

Moore's dialogue with Andrew Walker, the ERLC's director of policy studies, came after several former military chaplains and a group of atheists criticized the new guidelines. Some said SBC chaplains should resign because they would be unable to fulfill their duties among all service members.

Moore, however, noted, "We have liberal Baptist groups who for many, many years have talked about religious liberty and separation of church and state now saying we need an established religion that says the sexual revolution is now codified and the government ought to enforce it."

"What essentially is happening is we're calling for the separation of church and state, to be able to say chaplaincy isn't a subset of the military. Instead, what the military is doing — having chaplains — is to enable people in the military to freely exercise their religion. It is not just a post of some kind of American civil religion."

"That is why we don't just have a vague, generic, least-common-denominator chaplain."

It is also why Mormons, Buddhists, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims have military chaplains, Moore said.

NAMB is the Southern Baptist agency that administers the SBC chaplaincy program and appoints chaplains on behalf of the convention.

In addition to prohibiting participation in same sex marriage ceremonies and counseling same sex couples, NAMB guidelines now include explicit statements that Southern Baptist chaplains will practice ministry in light of the biblical definition of marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime," as described in the SBC Baptist Faith and Message.

The guidelines also state that Southern Baptists view all sexual immorality as sin that violates God's biblical standards for purity and that "responsible pastoral

care will seek to offer repentance and forgiveness, help and healing, and restoration through the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ's sacrificial gift of love on the cross."

Finally, Southern Baptist military chaplains are prohibited from participating in jointly-led worship services "with a chaplain, contractor or volunteer who personally practices a homosexual lifestyle or affirms a homosexual lifestyle or such conduct."

NAMB guidelines acknowledge that Southern Baptist chaplains serve in a pluralistic setting but expect, under U.S. Department of Defense guidelines, that the rights and freedoms of chaplains will be protected so they may "preach, teach and counsel in accordance with the tenets of their denominational faith group and their own religious conscience" while treating all others with dignity, respect and Christ-like love.

Walker said in the video dialog that NAMB found it necessary to offer a more precise statement of its chaplaincy guidelines in a "post-DOMA" world created by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn the federal Defense of Marriage Act in June.

"We're very concerned about our chaplains offering a proper witness — a Christ-like witness — that respects all individuals in the military but also holds firm to Southern Baptist doctrine," Walker said.

He also said there is "nothing condemning about the regulations," but not everyone agrees.

Critics of NAMB's policy change argue that the new regulations will force Southern Baptist chaplains into indefensible positions with military leaders and into violating their pledges to serve in a pluralistic and multicultural environment.

On Sept. 16, Tom Carpenter, co-founder of the Forum on the Military Chaplaincy and an elder with the Presbyterian Church USA, wrote in an opinion editorial carried by Associated Baptist Press (ABP) that the NAMB regulations would force Southern Baptist chaplains to choose between "God or country."

"Given that choice, as men (NAMB forbids women to serve as ordained chaplains) of God the only honorable course of action for most will be to resign their commissions and return to civilian ministry," Carpenter wrote.

He also encouraged SBC chaplains to seek the endorsement of "another denomination or faith group, one that truly endorses inclusion,

collegiality, and pluralism."

On Sept. 23, ABP published another commentary from former military chaplains Paul Dodd and Herman Keizer Jr. Dodd served 31 years as a chaplain and also is co-chair of the Forum on the Military Chaplaincy. Keizer currently is co-director of the Soul Repair Center at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth.

Dodd and Keizer argue that faith communities can establish doctrines related to homosexual activity, and "while these faith communities are expected to endorse fully qualified chaplains who share their beliefs, these communities have also accepted the mandate that all chaplains must be able to work within the pluralistic and multicultural environment of the military."

"Attitudes of religious hostility, which erect walls rather than build bridges, are incompatible with those pledges."

A group calling itself Military Atheists and Freethinkers also issued a statement that the NAMB guidelines place military chaplains in a "Catch-22" situation.

"They must defy military regulations and their duties or defy their denomination. They must either work with and for all service members without discrimination based on sexual orientation — or — they must avoid all cooperation even with those who affirm gays and lesbians," the group said.

That understanding of military chaplaincy, however, is inconsistent with U.S. Department of Defense regulations and the guidelines issued for military chaplains from NAMB.

When the Department of Defense officially ended its "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on homosexuals serving in the military in September 2011, Under Secretary of Defense Clifford Stanley issued guidelines allowing military chaplains to perform same sex marriages.

Stanley wrote that chaplains could participate in or officiate private ceremonies, on and off military bases, "provided that the ceremony is not prohibited by applicable state and local law." At the time, DOMA was still a part of federal law.

Importantly, the memorandum confirmed existing Defense Department doctrine on the duty of chaplains to either perform religious services or accommodate religious exercise through other means.

"Further, a chaplain is not required to participate in or officiate a private ceremony if so doing would be in variance with the tenets of his or her religion and personal beliefs," Stanley wrote in the memo in 2011.



IN SERVICE — The unique role of military chaplains is spotlighted by the bronze statue in the Prayer Garden of the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center's Chaplain Corps at Fort Jackson near Columbia, S.C. The statue depicts a military chaplain in full combat gear comforting a distraught soldier on the battlefield. (BP photo)

Gary Pollitt, a spokesman for the Military Chaplains Association, told ABC News in 2011 that military chaplains conduct "religious ceremonies and rites in keeping with the canon of the religious group that endorses the chaplain. Each faith group defines the parameters for religious rites and the clergyman's individual discretion with those rites."

The statements from Stanley and Pollitt are brief descriptions of still-existing policy within the military. In the Army's manual on religious support (FM1-05), for instance, chaplains are said to be protected under the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.

"As credentialed religious leaders, who are themselves guaranteed the free exercise of religion, chaplains cannot perform religious support contrary to their faith tradition, tenets, and beliefs," the manual reads.

Army Regulation 165-1 notes that chaplains, while performing their duties of facilitating free exercise of religion and religious services, "remain fully accountable to the code of ethics and ecclesiastical standards of their endorsing faith group. In some instances, this may restrict Chaplain participation in a command event, but it does not relieve the Chaplain from providing adequate religious support to accomplish the mission."

The regulation also states, "Chaplains will not be required to perform a religious role (such as

offering a prayer, reading, dedication, or blessing) in worship services, command ceremonies, or other events, if doing so would be in variance with the tenets of practices of their faith. Chaplains will make every effort to provide for required ministrations which they cannot personally perform."

Major General Doug Carver (U.S. Army, Ret.), executive director of chaplain services for NAMB and a former chief of chaplains for the U.S. Army, told Baptist Press in a statement that he was grateful "for the leadership and partnership Russell Moore and the ERLC has provided as we help our chaplains navigate these issues."

"We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from our chaplains regarding the guidelines," Carver said. "We've also heard from other denominations who have asked if they can use portions or all of our guidelines as they develop similar policies for their chaplains regarding ministry and same-gender relationships."

Southern Baptists are not the first denomination to indicate its military chaplains would not be allowed to participate in same sex marriage ceremonies. After "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was lifted in 2011, Archbishop Timothy Broglio, head of the Catholic Archdiocese for Military Services, said Roman Catholics, in accordance with church doctrine, would not perform same sex wedding ceremonies.



MOORE

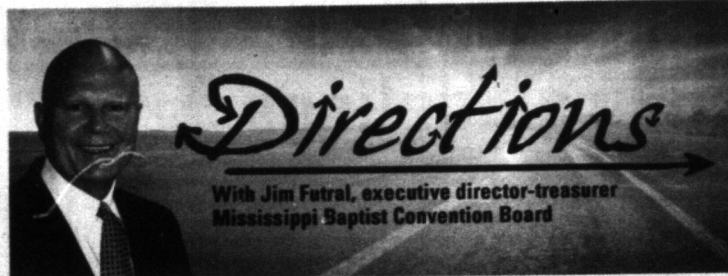


WALKER

It was the middle of summer one morning at daybreak when I just happened to see a flash of a leaf falling from high up in a huge oak tree. With little or no wind I watched as the leaf seemed to bounce around in the atmosphere on its way to the ground. As I walked along, my path intersected a few feet away from where the leaf finally landed. It was not a dead leaf and it was not a leaf that had changed colors for fall. It was a green leaf that appeared to me to be healthy, but now it was all alone, detached from the tree and lying on the ground. I passed on by going on my early morning walk, but I was still thinking about that one solitary leaf.

Among other questions that crossed my mind I was wondering why this leaf let go on this morning. Setting aside all of the biological jargon of what causes a leaf to be attached to a tree, I thought about how much this leaf had been through over the past few weeks. It did not let go then and so why now? We had experienced strong winds and rains in the neighborhood, and after all of that why did the leaf let go on that morning?

The reason that bothered me was because I have wondered the same thing about the saints of God. What combination of things happens in us that we give up, lose faith and our hearts melt? I have watched as people have gone through life's trials with incredible troubles all around them and with pressures both from within and from without which would seemingly crush a soul, but they held on and stood strong. Then when everything seemed to be going smoothly and for no apparent reason, at



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

One Solitary Leaf

least to those who watched and maybe even to them as they experienced it, they just let go.

I have seen folks do that with church and their outward expression of walking with God. I have seen them do it with their job. For whatever reason, they let go and walk away. I have seen them do it with their marriage. They quietly crash after everything from crying to complaining, to counseling to commitment. Why then? Those are questions about areas of life which I am convinced cannot be answered because the answers cannot be found. But like the falling of the early morning leaf, often there is little that can be done to stop us from just letting go if that is what we choose to do.

I looked back at the tree. There must have been tens of thousands of leaves

covering that big oak, but only one solitary leaf fell that morning. I do not know if anything or how much could have been done by the other thousands of leaves to avoid that moment. I certainly am aware that in the faith world and among believers we are able and encouraged to bear one another's burdens and to reach out to a brother or sister, a friend or neighbor and help them to hold on. But I also recognize that at best we still may not know what is going on in someone's heart, down deep in their thought life and in the inner atmosphere that may exist of despair, dread and loneliness. So in a moment when it is least expected, they let go, give up and almost float away from all of us.

In retrospect, all of us want to cry out to the leaf and explain how extremely valuable one solitary leaf is. If

it was not for one leaf, no tree would be covered with leaves. While the one leaf may seem small and could argue it is insignificant to the tree, it would be wrong. For that one is needed both to help bring nourishment to the tree and enable the tree to produce future life. The one little leaf falling could not see that and it gave up.

There is an argument that I can make and I think that I could even win in explaining to a dad how important he is to his children and his wife. I could argue with a mom who thinks that she is not making a difference that she of all people is desperately needed. I could talk to a grandparent who may feel that the important days of life have gone by and the relationships now are few and insignificant. Wrong! I could remind the workman who feels useless and worthless because he does not have a job at the moment that he is still a person of great value.

Now if by chance you feel like that one solitary leaf, my encouragement to you is don't feel that way for it is untrue. Don't let go because you are still needed. Don't become detached for you can both give and receive in the relationship. In the words of the great Apostle Paul in the magnificent resurrection chapter, I Corinthians 15, he concludes it by saying, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (vs. 58).

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Clue: M = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans 5:5

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Staff Changes



DESOTO CHURCH, DESOTO, has called Keith Yelverton as pastor effective July 1. He is shown with his wife Tera and son Luke. The Yelvertons have recently adopted a little girl, Mariana Grace. The Yelvertons come from Trinity Church, Laurel.

College News

In College News:

William Carey University has been notified by Institutional Research and Evaluation, Inc. of its inclusion in "America's 100 Best College Buys." Carey is included in the 18th edition of the prestigious national listing based on measures of Carey's quality academic program and lower than average cost. Other Mississippi schools listed are

Belhaven University and the University of Mississippi. This new listing comes soon after the recent announcement by U. S. News and World Report naming WCU as the South's number one "Best College Value." Other significant distinctions include being ranked as a "Top Tier Regional University" by U.S. News and World Report and named a "Military Friendly School."

IN THE NAME OF JESUS

RISE UP

ACTS 3:6, 16

SPIRITUALLY • PHYSICALLY • EMOTIONALLY • INTELLECTUALLY



October 29-30, 2013 • First Baptist Church, Jackson

Mississippi Baptist Convention

October 29-30, 2013 • First Baptist Church, Jackson

For a schedule of events and other convention information, please visit www.mbc.org.

Just for the Record

GA's from **FIRST CHURCH, RICHTON**, held a party celebrating the 100th anniversary of GA's. Shown are Hanna M. Shaw, Leah Melvin, Ella Grace Smith, Sarah McMillan, Isabelle Smith, Abby Nichols, and Mallory Smith.



GA's and WMU women from **SILVER CREEK CHURCH, PIKE ASSOCIATION**, passed out 10 cases of water and tracts to people at the Pike County Fair Sept. 7.



AUBURN CHURCH, TUPELO, ordained Ryan Sewell as deacon. Shown are pastor Jimmy Henry, Sewell, and Amanda Sewell.



LOLLARS GROVE CHURCH, EUPORA, ordained Terry Gore as deacon Sept. 22. Shown are pastor William Weddle and Gore.



CROSS ROADS CHURCH, RANKIN COUNTY, ordained Kirk Gordin and Austin Key as deacons Sept. 22. Shown are Gordin, Mindy Gordin, pastor John Vaughn, Kessie Key, and Key.

WEST MCCOMB CHURCH, MCCOMB, surprised pastor Vann Windom and his wife Denise by renovating their kitchen, living room, two bathrooms, and utility room, installing new flooring, lights, appliances, counter tops, backsplash, flat screen TV with surround sound, painting, and landscaping while the Windoms were away for four days in Washington, DC. Shown are the Windoms in their new kitchen.



In other Church News:

➤ **Meadowview Church, Starkville**, is hosting a men's conference Oct. 18 - 19 featuring Ted DiBiase, Gerald Simmons, Kenny Digby, Ronald Meeks, Wade Stevens, Seth Kirkland, and Scott Cappleman. Registration, \$45. For details and registration, call (662) 323-2963 or visit www.mbcstark.com

➤ **Highland Church, Natchez**, held VBS recently, with an average attendance of 200 children. Stephanie McCall, VBS director; Paul Southerland, pastor.

➤ **First Church, Terry**, is hosting a WorldCrafts Party Oct. 5, 10 a.m. Brunch provided. All proceeds will benefit impoverished artisans worldwide. WorldCrafts is a division of WMU.

Thursday, October 24, 2013 / 8:00 am - 3:30 pm / First Baptist Church Jackson, Jackson, MS

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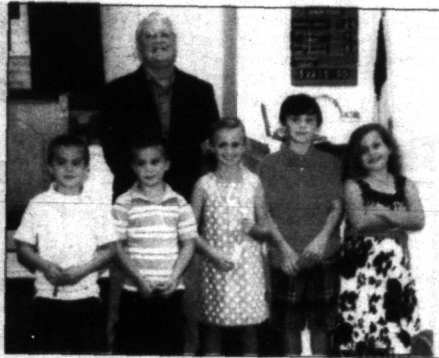


Connecting People
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FIRST BAPTIST JACKSON

Just for the Record



Children from **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, are shown with their Margaret Lackey offering jar.



ETHEL CHURCH, ETHEL, recently celebrated the second annual Salvation Celebration where those baptized in the last church year were recognized. Hamburgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings were served following the morning service.



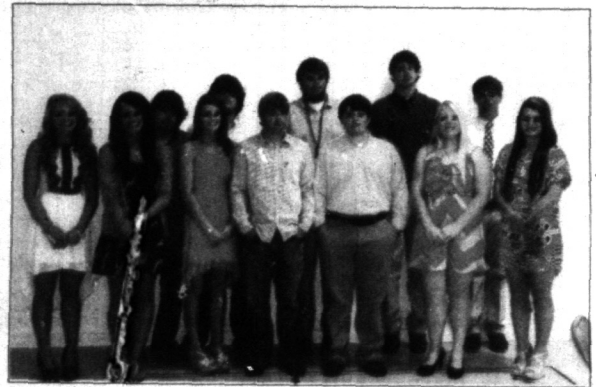
GOODWATER CHURCH, MAGEE, presented a plaque to Wiley Ainsworth for his lifetime of dedication and service to the church Sept. 22. Ainsworth was ordained as a deacon in 1969. Shown are Steven Reed, Ainsworth, and Rose Ainsworth.



WESSON CHURCH, WESSON, ordained Scott Speights as deacon Sept. 22. Shown are Jeff Knight, Sharon Speights, Speights, and pastor Nelson Santa Ana.



NEW HOPE CHURCH, MYRTLE, ordained John Clark, Ricky Jordan, and Mike Gonzales as deacons Sept. 22. Shown are Clark, Jordan, pastor Freddy Johnson, and Gonzales.



GOOD HOPE CHURCH, NANIH WAIYA, recently honored their twelve graduating seniors with a breakfast and recognition in their worship service.



The Mission Friends of **SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION**, celebrated Christmas in August by boxing school supplies and sending them to Elk City, Ky., to the children of coal miners who couldn't afford to purchase them. Katherine Boling and Peggy Billingsley, leaders; Rusty Fair, pastor.



IMMANUEL CHURCH, GREENWOOD, held a RA/GA Recognition Day.

FLOWOOD CHURCH, FLOWOOD, held a baby dedication. Shown are Elizabeth Donald and daughter Ashleigh; Josh and Christina Tyrone and son Davis; Ike and April Massey with son Trotter and daughter Ally. Also shown with the Masseys are Lee and Madison.



Students from **MILITARY CHURCH, SUMRALL**, attended M-fuge in Mobile, Ala., June 17-22, participating in mission work, cleaning yards, coordinating backyard Bible study groups, working in community centers, and sharing Christ. Two of the students helped lead someone to Christ.

KENYA

cont. from p. 1

Two hours after his wife and their four other children made it to safety, Chris and their son were able to flee and join them at the home of IMB missionaries Jack and Bert Yates a block from the mall.

"We are certain that among the greatest moments of joy of our lives, is when Jack and I spotted Jamie and the younger kids walking towards us, and then as we received the gift of giving them hugs," Bert Yates said.

When Chris and their older son escaped, they were met by a co-worker, Debbie McFerron, an IMB missionary who lives a two-minute walk from the mall, sent out continuous reports and prayer requests as events unfolded over the four days.

"Hearing barrages of gunfire, the blasts of grenades, and the roar of low-flying police and army helicopters were all constant prayer reminders," McFerron wrote on Facebook and a personal blog she and her husband maintain.

"Pray that even as people's thoughts ran to God during the crisis, they would continue to run to God as daily life resumes," she wrote in the aftermath of the crisis.

The day before terrorists seized Nairobi's Westgate Shopping Mall, Bert Yates was there. "How long will it be before terrorists make good their threats and attack a public place such as this?" she said she thought to herself.

Less than 24 hours later, her thoughts became a reality. For four days, the tragic events of the mall's takeover and hostage crisis unfolded around them. By the time it was over, as many as 200 people were dead, hundreds were traumatized, and over 175 wounded.

Kenyan authorities continue the grim task of recovering victims buried beneath the rubble of the internally collapsed building. A combination of multiple explosions and intentionally set fires caused sections of the mall to give way.

Militants of the Somali-based al-Shabaab organization seized the mall in retaliation for what they called Kenya's interference in internal Somali affairs.

Bert Yates and her husband heard the gunfire and explosions, and watched as helicopters hovered over their house for 72 hours before the crisis was over. "I would often stop, especially after times of sporadic blasts and firing, and think how calm and normal things were in our house and garden."

"People were suffering only a short distance away in ways that I could not even imagine. To be so close, but so separated, was a surreal experience, eerie, but really there is no good, defining word."

"These things happen. It's sometimes the cost of doing [mission] business. It is the reason we are here. Only Christ can penetrate this evil."

Jamie Suel
IMB missionary

Terrorists managed to hold off Kenyan security forces for four days before Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was finally able to announce the end of the ordeal.

While both the terrorists and Kenyan security forces used social media to propagate their victories during the siege and hostage situation, Bert Yates extolled social media's value for raising prayer support.

"As I shared on one of my Facebook work pages, Thank you for your prayers. You have definitely reaffirmed my belief in Facebook and social media being incredible prayer tools!" she wrote.

The prayer value of social media was also affirmed when news of the Westgate mall being on fire was posted on Facebook and in various blogs, including IMB's CompassionNet page on Facebook, Yates said.

Based on what I can document and intelligent guesses, more than 10,000 people viewed this prayer item within a few hours, she said.

Retired IMB missionary Sharon Pumpelly shared on her church's Facebook page a prayer request she received from Nairobi. It was about a young family who lost their lives in the attack on the mall. The woman, a Harvard University graduate, was eight-and-a-half months pregnant.

"We have a [missionary] friend who is out in Kenya ministering to pregnant couples," Pumpelly wrote. "After a birthing class, one of the couples went to the mall."

Pumpelly's friend, a missionary with Africa Inland Mission, shared, "It breaks my heart to say that we lost expectant parents and their unborn baby in this attack. These parents were very happy, excited, and ready for their little one to arrive."

Found dead on the floor of the mall, the expectant father was cradling his wife in his arms, one hand draped protectively over her pregnant stomach. He was a recognized architect, having designed free of charge an HIV-AIDS hospital in Kenya. She was a well-known malaria specialist working in Kenya with the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation.

"Please pray for these families as they have lost so much," Pumpelly's friend said, "and please pray for our team as we embrace the people here at our training center, that God would prepare our hearts and minds."

Tim Tidenberg, IMB strategy leader for East Africa, wrote,

"Living very near what is left of the Westgate Mall, the last few days have been ones of shock. As we watched the terrorist situation unfold, we continued to go to the promise of a faithful God and to His presence with us."

Today (Sept. 26), the mission community met together for a time of prayer — a time to encourage and to see each other face to face," he said. "As we met, the subject of His faithfulness again came to the forefront. In days such as these, we must keep our eyes on Him."

While reflecting on the trauma she and her family went through, Jamie Suel said, "These things happen. It's sometimes the cost of doing [mission] business. It is the reason we are here. Only Christ can penetrate this evil."

"He called us, we obey, and stay until He releases us. Sometimes living in the center of God's will is dangerous. Dangerous, but God is good. I'm praying that God will use this to bring glory to Himself, which He always does."

Through its Member Care ministries, IMB provides counseling service to missionary families when they experience trauma like that in Nairobi.

Tim Cearley, a senior IMB strategy leader in Africa, said, "We are so thankful for God's protection over our personnel during the recent trouble in Kenya. Of course our personnel were greatly affected as they waited, prayed and heard gunfire, explosions and screams. As well, our hearts go out to all the people of Kenya. So many people in Nairobi are deeply grieving the loss of the sense of a peaceful and safe place to live."

"Now we ask that people pray for peace and for healing," Cearley added. "Pray, too, that believers will have opportunities to share the hope they have within them, and the true source of their peace."

Revivals & Homecomings



FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION, celebrated its 175th anniversary Sept. 15. History books chronicling the history of the church were available. The church held a meal on the grounds. Shown are former pastor Jeff Parker and current pastor, Corey Fonten.

► **Spangle Banner Missionary Church, Mid-Delta Association**: 100th anniversary, entire month of October; Wednesdays, 6 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.; Oct. 2, Anthony Burns; Oct. 6, David Michel and Jesse King; Oct. 9, Levon Jackson; Oct. 13, Charles Young and Fred Hinson; Oct. 16, Jerry Johnson; Oct. 20, Fredginol Wilson and David Hamilton; Oct. 23, Tommy Williamson; Oct. 27, Jim Futral and Clarence Cooper, Jr.; Oct. 30, Milton Evans.

► **Goodwater Church, Smith County**: Revival, Oct. 6 - 8; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m.; Doyle Boyles, speaker; Mike Walker, pastor.

► **First Church, Lauderdale**: 40th homecoming, Oct. 6; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Carless Evans, speaker.

► **New Hope Church, Foxworth**: Homecoming, Oct. 6; John Bell, speaker and music leader; Traci & Children, music; lunch followed by Bell family concert.

► **Smyrna Church, Hazlehurst**: Homecoming, Oct. 6; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and mini-concert with By His Grace; Walt Grayson, speaker.

► **Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle**: 128th homecoming, Oct. 6; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; George Berger, speaker; special music during service; Keith Thompson, pastor.

► **First Church, Bude**: 100th anniversary, Oct. 6; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon celebration.

► **Galilee Church, Rankin Association**: Homecoming, Oct. 6; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Joel Eavenson,

speaker; Ray Gates, song director; local talent, music; Marcus Burnham, pastor.

► **Mt. Vernon Church, Liberty**: Revival, Oct. 4 - 6; Fri. - Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Zack Smith, speaker; Hubert Greer, music; Jerry Causey, pastor.

► **Sand Hill Church, West**: Revival, Oct. 6 - 9; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; children and youth night, Mon., 6 p.m.; Family night, Tues.; fellowship meal, Wed., 6 p.m.; Chris Aldridge, speaker; Harvey and Tommie Overstreet, music.

► **Ludlow Church, Ludlow**: Homecoming and revival, Oct. 6 - 9; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and singing; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Reggie Williams, speaker; Dwight Cooper, worship leader; Gary Lawson, pastor.

► **Harmony Church, Lincoln County**: Homecoming, Oct. 6; singing, 10 a.m. featuring The Gloryland Quartet; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Wiley Reid, speaker.

► **First Church, Stonewall**: Revival, Oct. 6 - 9; Sun., worship, 10:50 a.m., followed by lunch and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jerry Mixon, speaker; Lee Robinson, music.

► **Enon Church, Grenada**: Homecoming, Oct. 6; services, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Ray Burt, speaker; Anthony Bollinger, music.

► **Thomastown Church, Thomastown**: Revival, Oct. 7 - 9, 7 p.m.; Bruce Freeman, speaker; Gary Caudill, music.

Correction: In the September 26 edition of The Baptist Record, the name of the pastor of Ted Church, Louin, should have read James Shumaker. The Record regrets the error.

MEDICARE
Supplement

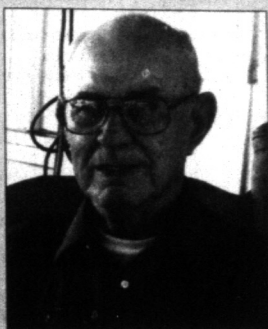
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OBITUARY

James Wilbur Walters died Sept. 11. He was a native of Scott County, and graduated from Ingold High School. He answered the call to the ministry and enrolled at Clarke Memorial College in Newton in 1946. Later on he continued his education and received his doctoral degree in theology. During his lifetime he served as a bivocational pastor in various counties throughout the state of Mississippi before he became a full time pastor. He was the founding pastor of East Forest Church. Upon retirement, he joined the membership at Ephesus Church.



WALTERS

ABEDINI

cont. from p. 1

United States, the Islamic Republic announced the release of 80 prisoners of conscience.

"Unfortunately, it appears that Pastor Saeed was not among those reportedly released," Jay Sekulow, ACLJ's executive director, said Sept. 23. "We can confirm that Pastor Saeed's family in Tehran saw him today during regular visitation hours, and as of noon Tehran time, he was still imprisoned and the family has not been notified that his status has changed."

Sekulow noted that Rouhani is "clearly seeking international approval."

"If Iran's new president wants the American people and the international community to believe he is a true reformer, he must release Pastor Saeed. As long as prisoners of conscience, including a U.S. citizen, suffer torment in Iranian prisons, President Rouhani's claims of change will remain unsubstantiated."

Abedini's letter to Rouhani joins more than 80,000 such letters written on his behalf by concerned citizens around the world through Be Heard, a project launched in September by ACLJ for Abedini and other persecuted believers.

"Pastor Saeed is not the only Christian in chains for the Gospel," David French of ACLJ wrote Sept. 16. "He's not the only Christian who faces mortal peril simply because of his faith... Go to Be Heard, write a letter for Pastor Saeed, then stay and learn about the plight of Christians in Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, and beyond."

Evangelist Billy Graham is among those who have written a letter to Iran's president calling for Abedini's release. Graham, who enjoyed a 50-year ministry as a spiritual ad-

viser to American presidents, told Rouhani that Abedini's case has received a substantial amount of attention in the United States, reflecting negatively on Iran.

Graham wrote that he fears "that the current publicity surrounding the continued imprisonment of Pastor Abedini, an American citizen, may further harm the already fragile relationship that presently exists between our two nations."

If Rouhani would release Abedini, Graham wrote, such an action "might well be perceived by our leadership as a significant step in reducing tensions."

While U.S. President Barack Obama has yet to speak publicly about Abedini, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has twice released routine statements through his press office calling for Abedini's release.

More than 620,000 people worldwide have signed a petition demanding his release, underscoring the international attention his case has received.

In a blog post at Desiring-God.org Sept. 24, Naghmeh Abedini reflected on the spiritual strength she has gained during the past year because of a trial which she pleaded for God to remove.

"All I can remember about those first days are tear-soaked eyes and indescribable anxiety and grief. Evenings consisted of me holding my seven-year-old daughter and five-year-old son as they cried themselves to sleep asking for their daddy," she recounted.

As she has learned to receive and endure the hardship for the glory of God, Naghmeh Abedini wrote, "Saeed and I always asked God for opportunities to share the Gospel with the nations. We never anticipated it would be this way, but God has graciously heard and answered our prayers."

BLACKABY

cont. from p. 1

transferred home in Atlanta by this weekend.

"The family cannot thank you enough for your prayers and kind wishes. We believe God has some special tasks remaining for Henry to do and we know he will be eager to undertake them as soon as he is better!"

Blackaby, 78, suffered a heart attack while driving in Atlanta, became confused and traveled for 29 hours before police found him Sept. 20 in Tifton, Ga., 150 miles southeast of his home.

An update on the ministry's website Sept. 25 stated, "Henry has now been removed from the respirator as well as all remaining tubes. He has also been transferred to a normal hospital room. He is still in much pain and on morphine, but recovering well. The Blackabys continue to appreciate prayers for his speedy recovery."

Blackaby had been missing from his home in Rex, Ga., in metro Atlanta, since around 4 p.m. on Sept. 19. He was on his way to pick up his wife Marilyn from an appointment when he suffered the heart attack and became disoriented, according to a statement posted on the Blackaby Ministries International website.

Blackaby is best known for the *Experiencing God Bible study* he coauthored with Claude King. The discipleship resource, first published in 1990, has sold more than seven million copies in 45 languages.

He is retired from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board but has continued to lead prayer and spiritual awakening conferences internationally.

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format.

Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

JULY 2013

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Ms. Kathryn G. Floyd
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Mrs. Laverne Williams
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AUGUST 2013

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Mrs. Kay Little
Mrs. Maureen Clark
Mrs. Kay Little
Ms. Sarah Crowley
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Mr. Lester Cummings
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Ms. Ernestine F. May

AUGUST 2013

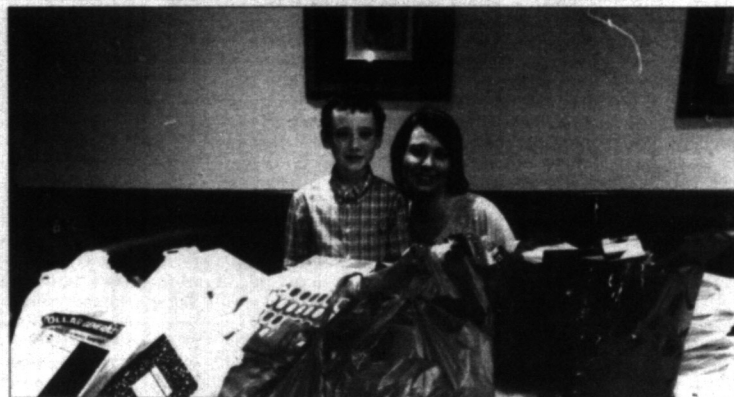
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Meet 10 year old Richie Lilly from Pontotoc, MS. This young man asked his friends and family to help him provide school supplies for The BCV instead of buying him gifts for his 10th birthday. When asked why he would do this he said, "I looked around my room and saw I didn't have anymore room for stuff and wanted to help someone else." We are so blessed by Richie's generosity. He is pictured with his mom, Michelle.

The Power to Save • John 4:39-54

"What right do we have to deny anyone access to the Gospel?" I first heard this question several years ago at a meeting in which Jerry Rankin, then-President of the International Mission Board, was speaking. The Lord has used that question in my life on many occasions since that day. Does a person's background, lifestyle or social status play a role in whether or not your church chooses to share the gospel with them? There is no reason or excuse, if you choose to share Christ with some and reject others. It is His gospel, not ours. It is our awesome privilege to be partners with Christ in what we commonly call "The Great Commission."

I recently shared a series of messages with the church I pastor titled, "The Gospel of Christ." It was my hope in those sermons to communicate the fact that often times Jesus went against grain of popular thought then, and even now. On more than one occasion, he challenged the religious establishment and He always seemed to do things differently than we would. There is a reason for that. He is God and we are not. The longer I follow Christ three things will happen: one, I will find myself meeting new people in new surroundings I once neglected. Secondly, I will develop a strong desire to be more and more like Christ. It is impossible to follow Christ and

not want to be like Him. Finally, others around me will think something is wrong with me! Once you decide to commit your ways and your walk to Jesus, you will be out of step with popular culture and sometimes the local church. Join me in John 4:39-54 and you will see what I mean.

In John 4:39-42 we pick up at the end of a story from last week's lesson about the Samaritan woman. Each

time I read of the Samaritan woman, I think of a baseball umpire. In Jesus' day being a Samaritan was, "strike one!" And if you happened to be a woman, society called, "strike two!" Pause and think about this: How much control do any of us have when we are born, the nation of our origin or whether we are born male or female? She may have been behind in the count when it came to the Jews of her day, (even the disciples were amazed Jesus talked to her) but with Jesus, she was accepted and loved. How about us? Are there those among us if others saw us talking to



Explore the Bible

with Bobby McKay

them they would react in judgment or disdain? Probably so. Nevertheless, that should not deter you from taking the name of Jesus to every corner of your county or city. You will discover people that may not look like you, but you may find out they look a lot like Jesus!

This Samaritan woman's testimony was a powerful instrument in the hands of God. Many men and women believed

as a result of her experience with Christ. She simply told her story and God saved the souls of numerous people in her city.

We read in verse 42 that because of the woman others desired to hear from Jesus. Of course, when they heard for themselves, they were amazed and believed. Talk about a good reminder for us all! We each have a testimony, a story to tell. Does your story point people toward Jesus or away from Him?

In the last nine verses of this chapter we read of a remarkable exhibition of the healing power of Jesus. As Christ was making His way back to Galilee a

man came to Him seeking a miracle. This man was most likely a worker for King Herod Antipas. Most translations either give him the title, "nobleman" or "royal official." Though the most important title he bore at that moment was, "daddy." This man had heard about the miracles Christ performed (they were in the same area of the water into wine event) and he was longing for Jesus to save his son from death.

Several translations use the word "implore" in verse 47. While there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, the NRSV shares the moment with the words, "he went and begged Jesus to come down and heal his son." Any parent can appreciate this rendering of the verse. There have been an infinite number of prayers offered up by parents throughout history in which they beg God for help with their children. He is faithful to hear them all.

Jesus healing the boy (from a distance, I might add) is not the greatest miracle in this story. The beauty of this story is at the close of verse 53 when we read of the man's salvation along with his household. That, my friend, is the power of Christ to save! So again I ask, why would you not want to share this with everyone?

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

The Pressure of Retaliation • James 5:1-11

When we have been wronged, we are to search the Word in order to respond with patient endurance because God always offers a better solution. A Christian is always teachable and we learn by quietly observing those who endure opposition and yet continue to exhibit love. That is strength to be admired. James shows us how we can have power without corruption, and how bitterness and fear can be defeated. It's possible because of the Holy Spirit in us.

You cannot but think about Job's experience. God himself sinned Satan on his faithful servant, and what powerful lessons we learned from Job's story! He is our all-time example from the Old Testament about enduring with faith. Did Job expect the outcome he got from his debacle? Can we learn from Job to not retaliate or seek revenge? When we come to feel like we're in a pressure cooker and the valve is clogged, can we heed James and learn to quash those pressures interfering with our lives. It's meant to do that for us.

In James' day, there were many converted Jews who received well the teachings of Jesus, but here he seems to be writing in general to the twelve tribes. In other words, the poorer Jews received the gospel, but in general the rich rejected it. As a result, those believers were hated and persecuted, so his first 6 verses were addressed to

them. He warns of the judgment that would come to them in V. 1, "Wake up now, you rich men, know that very calamitous miseries are to come and you will find no comfort among them and they will be there to eternity."

He explains that these miseries will come because riches corrupt and your garments become moth eaten. Obviously, they were greedily stockpiling

wealth for the sake of having it. James was not advising against wise savings, but was looking at excesses which tend to affect

moral concepts. Wealth in their day was measured by food storage, extra clothing, and stocking precious metals and jewels. His point was death and decay are found in all of creation. These things will become of no value but can in fact wound you and bring many sorrows.

God allows us to have worldly possessions so we may honor Him and do good things, but when we sinfully hoard and distrust God's providential care, it becomes a negative. Those with wealth often begin to seek power, usu-

ally followed by various temptations, such as cheating laborers out of hard earned wages and disenfranchising the poor. James says avoid the very appearance of such responses.

The story was told of the truck driver having lunch at the diner when a gang of motorcyclists came in and began taunting him. He seemed to ignore them and finished eating and left. The bikers laughed and made fun of him as a poor specimen of manhood. The waitress smiled and said "Well,

that's not all. He's a poor driver as well. He just ran over all your bikes." James offers a better course to follow. God does not forbid us pleasure on this earth but we are not to preclude obedience. Luxury not properly managed has a way of making us wanton and lazy. We become less aware of the needs and afflictions of others. Don't allow pride and fullness of bread to make us aware of only selfish pleasure.

James warns the rich in V. 5:3. "You have hoarded wealth in the last days." Still true today? Worse? Jesus used

an unforgettable example that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. Prayer, self-control in the midst of personal persecutions through faith overcomes our natural tendency to get even. Be very careful lest we end up blaming God for this dastardly thing in our lives.

James encourages us with his illustrations of the farmer in V. 7, the prophet in V. 10, and Job, in V. 11. Patience followed trusting. God in his time comes to set things right. We are to endure with patience. Job was stripped of possessions, lost all his children, and was stricken with yucky boils. His wife turned against him and offered ill advice. Yet Job endured, believing that God would not abandon him.

Retaliation seems to be desired and we savor its practice, only to take on guilt. God's plan is available to us, and choosing that leads to a life of blessings and rewards. James closes his Epistle abruptly but on a high plane. We humans are instruments of love to save souls. "Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins." Cover provocation with patience. If there is someone you are riled up against, try calling the whole thing off.

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

Bible Studies for Life

with Evelyn Gibson



LifeWay survey reveals attitudes on mental illness

NASHVILLE (BP) — A third of Americans and nearly half of evangelical, fundamentalist, or born again Christians believe prayer and Bible study alone can overcome serious mental illness, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

The survey also found most Americans (68%) would feel welcome in church if they were mentally ill.

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, said Christians care about those affected by mental illness. He's glad churches are seen as a welcome place for those with depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia — but he worries some Christians see mental illness as a character flaw rather than a medical condition.

Christians will go to the doctor if they break their leg, Stetzer said, but some may try to pray away serious mental illness. "They forget that the key part of mental illness is the word 'illness.' In a typical evangelical church, half the people believe mental illness can be solved by prayer and Bible study alone."

LifeWay Research asked four questions about mental illness as part of a telephone survey of 1,001 Americans conducted Sept. 6-10.

Thirty-five percent agree with the statement, "With just Bible study and prayer, alone, people with serious mental illness like depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia could overcome mental illness."

Responses are split by both faith and age. Fifty percent of those 18-29 years old say prayer and Bible study could overcome mental illness. That number falls to less than 30% for those 55-64.

Evangelical, fundamentalist, or born-again Christians (48%) agree prayer can overcome mental illness. Only 27% of other Americans agree.

Among other findings:

■ Just over half (51%) say someone close to them has experienced mental illness. That number drops to 37% for those over 65.

■ Fifty-four percent of Americans say churches should do more to prevent suicide. That number

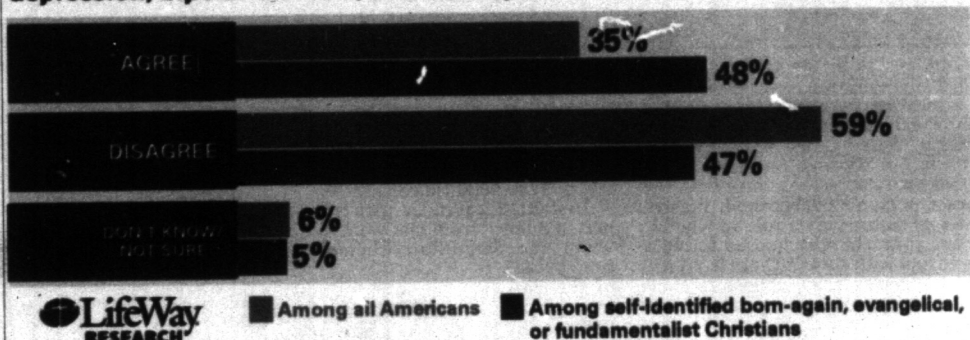


STETZER

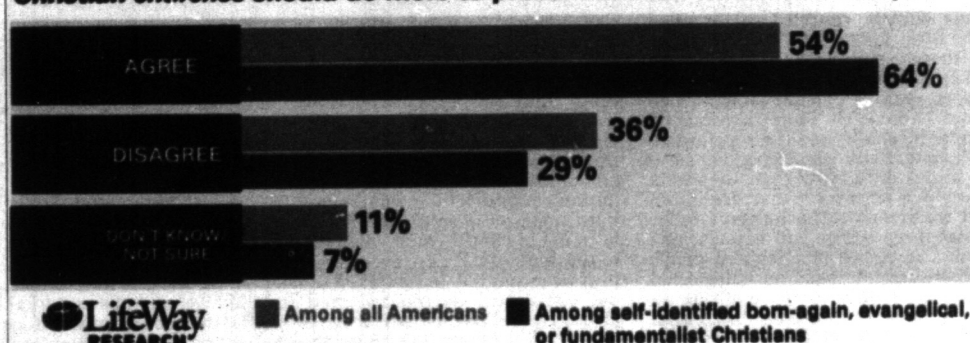


CLINTON

With Bible study and prayer ALONE, people with serious mental illness like depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia can overcome mental illness.



Christian churches should do more to prevent suicide in America today.



jumps to 64% among evangelical, fundamentalist, or born again Christians.

■ Americans who never attend church services are the least likely to agree that churches welcome those with mental illness. Those who attend weekly see churches as welcoming.

Tim Clinton, president of Forest, Va.-based American Association of Christian Counselors, said spiri-

tuality can play a crucial role in treating mental illness. He called it "soul care."

Clinton hopes more churches will become open to talking about mental illness. That means taking a holistic approach that deals with spiritual, emotional, and physical concerns.

That can involve counseling and medication as well as prayer and Bible study, he said. "Churches need to be biblical communities of healing."

First Person: Check personal 'blind spots' every day

By Larry Doyle
Correspondent

We know how important it is to check the blind spot when driving. It is one of the most important lessons we learn in driver's education class. Failing to check the blind spot could easily result in an accident.

After years of insistence and persistence from my wife, I finally purchased blind spot mirrors for our cars. Now, I don't know how I got along without them all these years and I don't know why I waited so long. They have literally saved my life more than once.

There are, however, other kinds of blind spots in life that are equally important. The truth is that most of us have huge blind spots when it comes to understanding ourselves and seeing ourselves as others see us. It is easy to recognize the faults and shortcomings of

others and fail to see our own.

Jesus taught this truth to His disciples, "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

Our inability to recognize our weaknesses and vulnerabilities is dangerous to our spiritual and emotional health.

After the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus predicted His arrest and subsequent death. Then He said to His disciples, "You will all fall away because of me this night." Simon Peter answered and said, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."

To this, Jesus responded, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three

times." Peter then exclaimed, "Even if I must die with You, I will not deny you," (Matthew 26:31-35).

We all know what happened shortly afterward. In the face of accusations from a little girl, Peter denied the Lord three times.

It is obvious — Peter had a huge blind spot. He was not self-aware. It cost him his testimony and broke his heart. It took the convicting work of God's Spirit to bring him to a point where he could see both his strengths and his weaknesses and to the realization that he must depend totally on God.

Many years later, a more humble and self-aware Simon Peter would write these words: "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God

may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4:11).

God's Word serves as a spiritual blind spot mirror. The apostle Paul wrote, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you" (Romans 12:3).

God's Word, just like the mirrors on our cars, is effective only if we put it to use. God's Word is not a magical book of formulas and incantations to be recited when we are in trouble or need advice. In a real sense it serves as a mirror, reflecting back to us the reality of our sins and human limitations, of God's mercy and grace and God's desire to transform us into the likeness of His Son.

In order for God's Word to

be effective, we must apply and obey the Word, not just hear it. "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does," (James 1:22-25).

Have you checked your blind spot today?

Doyle is director of missions of Piedmont Association in Greensboro, North Carolina. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.